

Minutes of Regional Council meeting held on April 2, 2008 at the USU Building in Vernal

Attending: Tammie Lucero, Randall Bennett, Floyd Wyasket, Shirley Weathers, Deena Mansfield, Jack Bell, Curtis Dastrup, Matt Watkins, Robert Peterson, Lana Carroll, Mark Raymond, Anne Mackiewicz, Shelley Fenn, Bill Johnson, Joe Shaffer, Darlene Burns, Sharon Wilkins, Wayne Dunbar, Paul Hacking, Mark Holmes, Irene Hansen, Shelly Ivie

Excused: Julie Curry, Greg Todd

Guests: Mark Dockins, Deb Dull, Cody White, David Feltch

Staff: Margo Weeks, Tami Huntington, Bob Gilbert,

Tammie welcomed everyone.

Introduced Mark Dockins, Deb Dull as visitors. Jone Wells is a new member, but couldn't make it today.

Minutes were reviewed. Randall motioned for approval, Mark R. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Tammie gave the Chairman's report. Reviewed the letter of support from the Council for the UBATC proposal for the High Growth Jobs Initiative. Tammie reviewed the Region Sector Plan and suggested that the Operations Committee look at the section on connecting with local education and training and counseling programs. Tammie said she has a new regional job with Mountain American that will involve marketing the services and products to businesses.

Anne suggested that Child Care be included in the sector plans. Also asked that someone pursue getting a private company to come to the Basin and offer child care, as there is a strong need for additional providers in the Basin. Mark Raymond suggested that an adhoc committee be looked at that could address the issue. Shelly Ivie said that would be a good idea. Mark motioned for a Child Care Task Force, and Shelly seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Volunteers for the task force were Anne, Irene, Deena, Deb D., Tammie, and Randall. Shelly said we could appoint a representative from each of the employment centers. Bob will organize an initial meeting for the task force.

Shelley Fenn then reported on Questar Gas operations. Questar serves 851,000 customers in Utah, Wyoming and Idaho. Shelly's territory covers all of Eastern Region. Presently, Questar has 7500 customers in Vernal area; have 11000 in the Basin. Last year, the company ran 95,000 feet of main lines, and 28,000 feet of service line. There were 508 new service lines, including commercial and residential. The number includes 12 new subdivisions in Vernal. All told, there were service lines to 644 new homes and businesses last year. Some were converted from propane, as there is a big cost

advantage to have natural gas: .37 cents a gallon compared to \$2.50 a gallon for propane. Customers have to split the cost of the gas line. Since purchased Utah Gas system, in Vernal, we are replacing 11,000 feet of pipe, also gas meters. In Roosevelt, Questar ran gas lines in 3 new subdivisions. In Roosevelt, there is contracts on six new subdivisions. In Vernal, have contracts for 3 new subdivisions - one is a huge one. We have already set 140 new meters in 2008. Service wait was 3 months last year; now it is about 3 weeks. Our office has 10 employees; we do maintenance work as well, and blue stakes are averaging 50 requests per day. There is no sign of slowdown in Vernal, including special projects in Vernal, and we are working on mapping systems in Vernal. Go Green is the new thing. Thermwise is a current Questar campaign that promotes energy conservation. Includes rebates for some purchases, and also offers a free energy audit for homeowners. Shelly said to call her at the office.

Tammie asked about the Price area. Shelley replied that Price not busy. Moab is booming with condos, and they are expensive. Has 8 employees in Moab. Irene asked about heat pumps and ground source options. Shelley said those systems have a big cost upfront, but that people who have them seem to really like the systems. They are a good option if you don't have a gas line near your home. We are currently having to use a Salt Lake contractor, and Questar keeps them busy full time in Vernal. Jack Bell asked about using natural gas for automobiles. Shelley said it costs about \$250,000 to set up a fuel station, and quite a bit to retrofit your car, so it hasn't been done yet, but there has been some discussion. Questar produces its own gas, so it is some of the cheapest in the nation.

Duchesne County Employers Committee

Randall then reported said we have been meeting regularly. He found that the Dog Poop Initiative, a video and workbook recently purchased by the DWS Roosevelt Office, has been very popular. Was presented by Greg Todd at an Employers Committee, and again in a Career Technical Education seminar. Most of the educators there went to the Dog Poop presentation, and didn't attend the Employer's panel, of which Randall was a part. An employer seminar was held on March 27th with Jeannie Tolbert presenting on Worker Retention. 90 people attended. The Committee has also sponsored some drug prevention seminars.

Vernal Employers Committee

Bill said the Vernal Employers committee has been meeting. Just recently had a seminar on Meth in the Workplace, and have talked about using Jeannie for her seminar on How to Keep Workers. May do a follow-up seminar on meth with a law enforcement and management focus. Also working on the Business Symposium. Have a commitment from Mark Eaton and Kathy Lovelace to be keynote speakers. It is scheduled for October 9. Another event is an upcoming career fair on April 24th from noon to four. Ute Tribe is also doing a career fair on that day in Ft. Duchesne. The Uintah Basin Energy Symposium is coming on May 22-23. Most of the business activity will be on May 22, with May 23 having outside activities. Booths are available in the indoor arena. Northeast Counseling is willing to give the meth presentation anywhere, anytime, so contact them if you have an interest.

Randall asked about recruiting at the career fair. Margo said the targeted audience is high school kids and the public, so there will be active recruiting opportunities.

Youth Council

Jack reported for the Youth Council. Said the guidance counselor initiative was not funded. Working on pathways. FERPA regulations require that student information is confidential. Jack reported that the schools are looking at getting some kind of approval form. Mark Dockins said they are working on getting a document signed when the student is in 9th grade, that would allow sharing of information and still meet the FERPA requirement.

Mark Raymond provided some information on the Energy Task Force. It was felt that Eastern Region was most impacted by energy. The Task Force focus is on workforce and training issues. First strategy was to get state of the art training programs to training institutions. Paul Hacking wanted to thank Shelly for going to bat for the incumbent worker training funding, which is being used to obtain a well simulator. Said that the legislature did not provide extra funds for the UBATC, or the diesel program, this year. The UBATC now has two grant proposals out, including one with the impact mitigation district. Mark said the second deliverable was to highlight the meth problems in the workplace. The Task Force is also working to get career ladders and information out to high school-aged kids, and see that certificates and licenses are offered from UBATC and USU. Also working to attract additional workers to the sector.

Deena Mansfield reported on the Healthcare Sector. Said we have come a long ways, as only a few years ago, Weber State was offering an on-line RN program every other year. Now CEU is providing a face-to-face instruction RN program as of January 08. Weber is also continuing to offer the online program. May have 28 RN slots next year. CEU did request ongoing funding this year that wasn't funded, so still need to do some work there. We need teachers for this program, as many of the Master's Degree Nursing graduates go into the health field. We are working to have those teachers available and in the pipeline. The 3rd deliverable is increasing students entering the healthcare field. Career pathways are being developed, HOSA is active at Union High School, other activities are planned. The bottleneck was education, as there weren't enough instructors or slots for students. The next bottleneck may be LPNs, as there may not be enough to fill the RN slots. And we need to continue to get more students that are choosing healthcare pathways/careers.

Shelly gave the Regional Director report. Shelly said we had a WIA rescission, where Utah had to pay back \$2.1 million of training funds to the federal government. We have completed that, but have little funding left for adults until July. We will get some more funding then, but not much is expected. Shelly was pleased to see the amount of incumbent worker funding that was awarded to our region. Said that the energy sector is bringing lots of revenue to the state and federal coffers. Have changed our point systems with the youth program, so that fewer youth will qualify for service due to limited

funding. We continue to see growth in our Medicaid programs; food stamps caseloads have leveled out, and TANF caseloads are not growing.

Anne asked about the Uintah Basin Medical Center hospital child care center being closed; Randall said they are looking at it, but haven't made a decision. May try to get other organizations to be involved. Would be a good topic for the Child Care Task Force. Anne also said there is an effort to standardize the regulations required for a childcare license. Will be discussed with the League of City and Towns.

Tammie thanked everyone for participating. Next meeting is on July 9th.